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# USDA Inside Information

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## IN SUMMARY

President issues executive order strengthening federal consumer programs...public television plans marketing program...PCBs keeping some information folks busy...Doane's farm media study readied...tragedy in Texas...travel agendas for USDA officials. And there is more.

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## DOANE'S FARM MEDIA STUDY ABOUT READY

We understand that Doane's study of agricultural news media should be ready in February. The study involves a survey of about 16,000 farmers on their reading, viewing and listening habits. Reports will be available in four categories: nationwide, nine regional, state and a "custom area tabulation" which can be broken down by counties. The study might be helpful in planning our future media priorities.

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## Reserve PCBs ANYONE?

The Food Safety and Quality Service's information staff here and the western information staff at San Francisco have been quite busy responding to many media and consumer inquiries about PCB contamination of eggs, poultry and meat in the northwest and midwest. We imagine many others of you also are getting calls from media and concerned citizens. You can get latest available information from the FSQS information staff in Washington or from the FSQS/AMS regional information office in San Francisco, or from one of the other regional information offices. They have copies of the national press release and Assistant Secretary Carol Foreman's testimony to a Congressional subcommittee on the subject.

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## MORE ON FSQS ENERGY FAIR

"Save a Little Energy for Me" is the message on the T-shirts and sweatshirts to be sold at the FSQS Energy Fair in USDA's patio. The fair, open to all USDA employees, will be held Tuesday, Oct. 9 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. The fair was organized by FSQS' information staff. Lots of free publications on how to save energy will be available, along with free posters, bumperstickers, and plastic tote bags to hold the collection of material.

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## FARM HISTORY ON TV

A Dallas, Tex. public television service is planning two 30-minute documentaries on agricultural history. Southwest information office of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service assisted in providing sources and location of historical farm film footage for producers of the show.

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PRESIDENT ORDERS  
CONSUMER UPGRADING

The President has ordered the federal government to dramatically upgrade its consumer programs and appoint strong consumer directors in each department. By executive order, he established a new Consumer Affairs Council to consist of representatives from the 12 departments, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Esther Peterson, the President's consumer advisor, was named to head the Council.

Among the five consumer program reforms included in the Presidential order is one dealing with information materials. It says agencies shall produce and distribute materials to inform consumers about agencies' responsibilities and services, about their procedures for consumer participation, and about aspects of the marketplace for which they have responsibility. In addition, each agency shall make available to consumers who attend agency meetings open to the public materials designed to make those meetings comprehensible to them.

The other four reforms deal with the consumer affairs perspective in development of agency rules, policies, programs and legislation; consumer participation in agency decisionmaking; education and training of agency staff members about the new federal consumer policy; and establishment of complaint handling procedures. USDA and other departments have 60 days in which to report plans of implementing the President's executive order. The plans will be published in the Federal Register and the public will have 60 days to comment on the department's plans.

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MARKETING ON TV

The Nebraska Educational Television Network is considering a new 30-minute weekly television program devoted to latest news in marketing of farm products, including a summary of trading on commodity futures. Jim Levy, senior producer, wrote to USDA for advice, and Herb Jackson, midwest information director for USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, has been in touch with the network about their proposed program. The program would be produced in Chicago and would be available for national distribution. They're aiming for a fall 1980 launching.

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ANOTHER 'INSIDE'

King Lovinger, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service information director, says he'll be glad to furnish copies of "Inside APHIS," the new agency employee newsletter, and details to anyone who might be interested. We mentioned this neat looking tabloid in a previous issue of "Inside..." It is a money-saver in that it replaces three separate newsletters and prevented two other administrative letters from being brought into existence. King explains that the format was prepared in cooperation with GPA's Design Division and that APHIS received a great deal of help from GPA's Publication Division in getting the first issue out.

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'TALL TALES' DEPT.

Thanks to help from a member of the AMS information staff here, photographs of a bean plant were forwarded to an aspiring writer of a children's book who is about to rewrite the story of "Jack and the Beanstalk in the Helicopter Age."

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NEW USDA ASSISTANT  
SECRETARY NOMINATED

If the Senate concurs with the President's nomination, USDA will have an assistant secretary in charge of public information for the first time in its history. On Friday, Sept. 27, President Carter nominated James C. Webster, now director of USDA's Office of Governmental and Public Affairs, to be an assistant secretary. (Technically, it's the assistant secretary position vacated earlier this year when Dale E. Hathaway became under secretary for international affairs and commodity programs, but Webster's job, workload and responsibilities won't change.)

The departments of State, Treasury, Defense and others long have had assistant secretaries for public affairs--in some cases another assistant secretary for congressional relations, too. But this will be the first for USDA, even if it does combine those two jobs with the intergovernmental affairs responsibility which has been in GPA since its creation in November 1977. Senate agricultural committee expects to hold the confirmation hearing Oct. 17.

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NATIONAL SEMINAR ON  
COMMUNICATIONS

In case some of you missed the invitation, the National Association of Government Communicators (federal, state, county, and municipal folks) is holding its annual communications seminar in Philadelphia, Pa., Nov. 1-2. If your registration is postmarked by October 20, it costs members \$95 and non-members \$125. After October 20, its \$120 and \$145. You can probably get more details from Nelson Fitton, GPA, who is NAGC's national capitol chapter president, or from Stan Prochaska, GPA.

One of the speakers, William Mullen, executive vice president of the National Newspaper Association, will report on NNA's special survey of its editors' opinions of government public information and what can be done about it. Dr. Kenneth Rabin, director of the public relations graduate program at American University in Washington, D.C., and executive director of the Institute for Government Public Information Research, will speak on "how the profession will probably develop in the 1980's." And, there'll be a reception in Franklin Memorial Hall in honor of Philadelphia's Benjamin Franklin, the "father of government communications."

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ON THE MOVE

We've received word that Bill Reed, Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service print media specialist at Little Rock, has left to become director of communications for Riceland Foods at Stuttgart, Ark. He says he'll miss the association with folks who have guided him through the past 3 years, but the opportunity and challenge of setting up a communications program in a major organization was just too good to pass up.

Eleanor Ferris, a long time with Agricultural Marketing Service information division here and with Food Safety and Quality Service information staff the past 2-1/2 years, is moving to the Science and Education Administration on Oct. 9. She will be responsible for the press and special reports activities of SEA's information staff.

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YEARBOOK FOR 19¢?

How would you like a copy of the 1978 Yearbook of Agriculture, "Living on a Few Acres," for 19¢? The GPO price is \$7.50.

We came across this incredible bargain in the October issue of Organic Farming as an introductory offer for signing up in the "How-To Book Club" at Blue Ridge Summit, Pa. Those joining the Club agree to purchase at least four additional books during the next 12 months.

The large book club advertisement in the magazine says that "Living on a Few Acres" is "a practical, hard-nosed guide to country living--with 48 chapters of how-to info on every aspect of part-time farming." In its praise of the Yearbook, the advertisement says: "Here, in one volume is literally everything you could want to know about farm and country living--"

Going on: "Whether you're thinking of going into farming for fun or profit, this book is an invaluable guide to dealing with all the problems and opportunities that face the modern country dweller."

So there now, and all for 19¢--plus shipping.

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TRAVELING, SPEAKING

Here are some tentative travel plans for USDA's top staff:

- Oct. 9 - Science and Education Director Anson Bertrand, Conf. of Amer. Assoc. of Univ. Agric. Administrators, Hardin, Kentucky
- Oct. 9 - Asst. Sec. Alex Mercure, Natl. Assoc. of Development Organizations, Albuquerque, New Mexico
- Oct. 9-10 - GPA Director Jim Webster, Agricultural Cooperator Council, Williamsburg, Virginia
- Oct. 9-11 - Asst. Sec. Rupert Cutler, National Forest System Advisory Committee, Seattle, Washington
- Oct. 10 - Asst. Sec. Alex Mercure, New Mexico B&I Seminar, Santa Fe, New Mexico
- Oct. 10 - Dep. Sec. Jim Williams, Florida Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Assoc. annual meeting, Lake Buena Vista, Florida
- Oct. 11 - Asst. Sec. Alex Mercure, Dedication of Small Farm Project, Albuquerque, New Mexico
- Oct. 12 - Asst. Sec. Carol Foreman, University of Missouri--Ag Week, Columbia, Missouri
- Oct. 12 - Asst. Sec. Bobby Smith, Tobacco Growers Information Committee meeting, Raleigh, North Carolina

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TRAGEDY IN TEXAS

Tragedy attended Secretary of Agriculture Bob Bergland's recent visit to Texas. Larry Provart, photographer for the Dallas Morning News, who had accompanied the Secretary during his day-long visit to the Dallas area, was shot and killed in the hotel parking lot near where the Secretary was speaking. Provart apparently had surprised a car burglar after he completed his assignment with the Secretary and was preparing to return to his news office.